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EDUCATION WEEK

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Benefit to Schools Seen in Democratic Control of Senate

The Changing of the Guard: 21 New Governors, 2 Chiefs

By Tom Mirga

The national political landscape changed dramatically last week, as voters sent 11 new Democrats to the Senate, giving the party control of the chamber for the final two years of President Reagan's term with a 55-to-45 majority.

Spokesmen for leading education organizations said they were optimistic that the major shift in power would work in their favor. But other observers raised the possibility that the education issue would be-

ELECTION '86

come a political football between the outgoing Republican President and the Democratic Congress in the two years leading up to the next Presidential election.

"It's a whole new ball game," said Nick Penning, a lobbyist for the American Association of School Administrators. "The biggest question is, how much will the President work with a Democratic-controlled Congress?"

Added Terry Hartle, an education-policy analyst with the American Enterprise Institute: "The biggest danger for education, and all other domestic-policy issues, will be if Mr. Reagan decides to take on the Congress and bring out his veto stamp. The fight over the budget could get very nasty."

Voters last week also elected 21 new governors. Among the losers was incumbent Gov. Mark W. White Jr. of Texas, who gained nationwide acclaim—but sharp

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THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION

Left to right, John R. Palmer of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Cecil G. Miskel of the University of Utah, and Donald P. Anderson of Ohio State University, all deans of education, confer at a Holmes Group meeting at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread conference center in Racine, Wis., in August.

Many New Members of Holmes Group Question Elements of Reform Agenda

By Lynn Olson

More than half of the 123 research universities invited to join the newly reconstituted Holmes Group—an organization seeking reforms in the way teachers are educated and the conditions under which they work—will probably do so by this Saturday's deadline.

But representatives from many of those institutions say they will move slowly to carry out the group's proposals. And some have questioned the wisdom or feasibility of the group's recommendations.

Education-school deans from a number of the institutions joining the group said during recent interviews, for example, that they were not convinced their schools should abolish the undergraduate education major—one of the group's central and most controversial proposals.

Howard Mehlinger, dean of Indiana University's school of education, said that, although the university plans to join the group, "we have no intention of eliminating the undergraduate major in education, nor of getting out of the business of permitting

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Justices Decline To Review Cases On Desegregation

Will Not Resolve Conflict Between Rulings on Busing

By Tom Mirga

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Supreme Court last week declined to resolve a major split between two federal appeals courts over the constitutionality of school districts' plans to abandon court-ordered student busing and return to neighborhood schools.

In a move that surprised many legal observers, the Court voted 8 to 1 to let stand conflicting appellate-court rulings earlier this year in desegregation cases involving the Norfolk, Va., and Oklahoma City public schools.

In the Norfolk case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit last February upheld a new student-assignment policy that has resulted in black enrollments of more than 90 percent in 10 of the district's 36 elementary schools. In contrast, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit in June invalidated a similar neighborhood-schools plan that had left 33 of the Oklahoma district's 64 schools more than 90 percent black.

The appeals courts thus reached opposite conclusions on one of the last major unset-

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Local School Boards Lose Power, Prestige, New Study Asserts

By Lynn Olson

WASHINGTON—Local school boards—the traditional bastion of lay governance in American education—have fallen in prestige and power, but are far from obsolete, according to a new national study.

"School boards have remarkable grassroots support across the United States," said Michael D. Usdan, president of the Institute for Educational Research, which conducted the study.

But while people support local boards in the abstract, he said at a press conference here last week, there is "widespread civic ignorance" and "civic apathy" about what the boards actually do.

Few voters participate in school-board elections, the institute, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, reported in its study, "School Boards: Strengthening Grassroots Leadership."

Although citizens in many communities say their boards are "well-meaning," the study said, they see them as mired in controversy and largely ineffective. Qualified leaders from the business and civic community are reluctant to run for board positions.

Board members surveyed complained that they lacked political clout and preparation for board service, spent too little time

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Clinics' Birth-Control Efforts Aim To Control Growth in the Black Population, Some Charge

By Debra Viadero

In the emotion-charged debate over whether and how school health clinics should dispense birth-control aids, dark new accusations—of "population control," "social engineering," even "genocide"—are beginning to emerge.

Brought to the surface during recent disputes over clinics in Boston, Chicago, and New York City, the isolated charges reflect what some national leaders see as a growing uneasiness among blacks and other minorities over the way the campaign to combat teen-age pregnancy is unfolding.

It is an uneasiness, they say, that has roots in American history, but is being fueled by the growing attention to demographic trends.

Donald H. Smith, professor of education at the City University of New York's Baruch College, is one of many black educators who claim, for example, that the distribution of contraceptives and birth-control prescriptions at New York City high schools with high concentrations of minority students may be part of a movement to "curtail the black birth rate and control the population."

"We recognize that the face of America is changing dramatically," said Mr. Smith, a past president of the National Alliance of Black Educators. "There are those in power who watch those demographics very carefully."

But others, such as Dr. Camilo Marquez, a New York child psychiatrist who led a group of 50 black doctors supporting the city's clinics, call such insinuations "emotionally provocative and patently absurd reactions."

Among those interviewed last week there was agreement on only one point: Discussion of the racial overtones in family planning is losing its behind-closed-doors quality. And soon, they said, the issue will be prominent nationally in the debate over

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Also in the news

4 Schools Seek Greater Guidance On Teaching About AIDS
Although many schools already include instruction about AIDS in their curricula, more are looking for help in developing programs.

5 School-Business Partnerships: Time for a Substantive Change
Participants in such programs are calling for a shift in focus from enrichment to such serious problems as dropouts and drug abuse.

6 Preschool Program Is Finding Too Few Takers in New York City
Officials may have to "knock on doors" to enroll more 4-year-olds in pilot classes of a citywide early-education program.

IN SUMMARY

I.Q. Test Fails Court Test
Following a federal judge's ruling, California education officials are preparing to notify schools that I.Q. tests may not be used to evaluate and place blacks in special-education classes. **Story on Page 4.**

Seeking Models To Meet the Mandate
Some schools were teaching about AIDS well before the recent calls for massive education programs, but most are just beginning to think about the topic and are looking for guidance. **Story on Page 4.**

Rethinking Partnerships
Participants in school/business partnerships laud their positive impact on education, but now urge a new emphasis on such serious problems as dropouts and drug abuse. **Story on Page 5**

In Arkansas: The Importance of Child Care
A blue-ribbon task force has linked the economic future of the state to the quality, availability, and affordability of child-care services, and has recommended legislative action. **Story on Page 6.**

Focus on the Turmoil of Teens
The Carnegie Corporation of New York has named 24 prominent Americans to its task force studying ways to promote healthier adolescent development. **Story on Page 9.**

Lessons of a Noble Life
Just as they teach about Jefferson and Madison, schools have a "duty" to teach about the life, work, and teachings of Martin Luther King Jr., Secretary of Education William J. Bennett says. **Story on Page 8.**

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THE WEEK

NATIONAL

Grants To Help Train Middle-School Teachers

The National Science Foundation last week announced a second round of grants aimed at improving the training of middle-school mathematics and science teachers.

The first set of grants was issued in August. Altogether, nine grants, totaling $8 million for five-year projects, have been awarded.

According to one grant recipient, few states offer special certification for middle-school teachers, and many colleges lack programs to prepare them.

Yet, said Linda Schulman, head of the science division of the Lesley College undergraduate school, the middle-school grades are when students form lasting attitudes toward science and mathematics.

With its $999,561 award, Lesley College will develop and implement a new curriculum for prospective teachers, Ms. Schulman said. It will provide training in both mathematics and science, as well as in teaching methods aimed at increasing women's interest in those fields.

The curriculum will also emphasize the relationship between science and society, she said.

Number of One-Parent Families Said Rising

More than a quarter of all American families with children—and more than 60 percent of all black families—were headed by a single parent last year, the U.S. Census Bureau reported last week.

Over the past 15 years, the bureau's report said, the growth in the number of single-parent families has been "one of the most significant changes in family composition."

In 1970, single-parent families accounted for 12.9 percent of all American families. Last year, according to the report, of the 33.4 million families with children, 8.8 million—or 26.3 percent—were headed by a single parent.

Among black families with children, 60.1 percent were headed by a single parent, compared with 35.7 percent in 1970. More than 20 percent of white families had only one parent, up from 10 percent in 1970.

The majority of single-parent families, the report said, were headed by women. They were the heads of households in 4.9 million of the 5.7 million white single-parent families and 2.6 million of the 2.8 million black single-parent families.

The researchers who compiled the report attributed the trend toward single-parent families to changing social attitudes. Young women who become pregnant out of wedlock no longer feel compelled to marry, they said, and give greater consideration to the impact marriage will have on their future.

But the report noted that, while the number of single-parent families is growing, the rate of increase is slowing. From 1970 to 1975, the number of single-parent families jumped by 48.7 percent. But from 1980 to 1985, it rose by 26.9 percent.

STATES

Preschool Project Aims To Cut Dropout Rate

Gov. Richard D. Lamm of Colorado last week announced plans for a two-year state project to train selected preschool teachers in methods of stimulating children's interest in school.

The Governor described the program, which was developed by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, as a way to bring about an eventual reduction in the state's high-school dropout rate.

David P. Weikart, president of High/Scope, predicted that the program could eventually halve the dropout rate, which is 6.1 percent statewide, according to the most recent figures available. In Denver, the rate is more than 10 percent.

Mr. Weikart also said studies have shown high-quality preschool education to be effective in reducing the likelihood that pupils will later be unemployed, commit crimes, or be dependent on welfare.

He said the High/Scope program's approach is to teach ways to get children interested in school by sparking their curiosity and encouraging responsibility.

The foundation will train 20 preschool educators each year, who will be expected to share what they learn with other teachers. The training will be paid for with $200,000 in public and private funds. Although details of the project's funding are still to be worked out, state officials said, selection of the teachers has begun, and the training sessions will begin at the end of the month.

Administrators Sued By Tax Group in Oregon

A tax-reform group in Oregon has filed suit against the state's school administrators' association, charging that the organization improperly used public funds to oppose a ballot measure that would have lowered property-tax rates. The plaintiffs, Oregon Taxpayers United, contend that the administrators should not have assisted the "No on 9, 11, and 12 Committee," which campaigned against several tax-limitation initiatives defeated in last week's election. *(See related story, page 14.)*

In its suit, Oregon Taxpayers United charges that the association allowed the anti-initiative committee to set up shop in its headquarters building and that association staff members assisted the committee's campaign efforts.

The administrators' association, along with several other state education groups, strongly opposed most of the tax measures on this year's ballot. The education groups supported proposition 7, which would have established a state sales tax.

"The taxpayers, which are us, don't have the kind of money that [the education groups] have to wage a campaign through the media," said Mary Lou Jessup, president of the tax-reform group. "We object to having our own money used against us."

Ozzie Rose, executive director of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, denied that public funds were involved in the group's election activities. Although the dues of some members are paid for by their districts, he said, the payments are fringe benefits for those members, not public expenditures.

"They are dead wrong, and I think they know it," Mr. Rose said. "I think they filed the suit just to get a little publicity before the election."

An Oregon circuit court will hold a preliminary hearing on the case next Monday, Ms. Jessup said.

DISTRICTS

Magnet-Plan Transfers Target of Justice Probe

The U.S. Justice Department is investigating the Montgomery County, Md., school board's voluntary-desegregation plan for possible civil-rights violations, a department official said last week.

The investigation marks the first time that the department has examined the transfer policies used to prevent racial imbalance in magnet-school programs, said Nathaniel Douglas, chief of the education section of the civil-rights division.

He said the department had received complaints from parents whose children were denied admission to the programs on the grounds that their enrollment would adversely affect a school's racial balance.

If the students were denied admission solely on the basis of their race, Mr. Douglas said, that would indicate a violation of Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Michigan District Offers Guarantee on Graduates

School officials in Howell, Mich., have offered local employers an unusual guarantee: If the district's high-school graduates are found lacking in basic skills, the employers can send them back.

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Study Says Boards Lose Power, Prestige

Continued from Page 1

on "real" educational issues, and expended too much time responding to state mandates.

The report, which was paid for with a grant from the American Can Company Foundation, is based on case studies in nine metropolitan communities—Alexandria, Va.; Atlanta; Columbus, Ohio; Hartford; Indianapolis; Jefferson County, Colo.; Lewisville, Texas; Oakland, Calif.; and Pittsburgh. The institute surveyed more than 200 board chairmen in the nine areas as well as in three largely rural states—Idaho, Iowa, and Wyoming.

Although the case studies focused on large school systems with enrollments of at least 10,000, such districts enroll 43 percent of the nation's students.

In each case study, researchers interviewed a cross-section of the community to determine how the boards were perceived and what people thought the boards' roles should be.

'Civic Ignorance'

The public has a "real commitment to local control" of schools, said Jacqueline P. Danzberger, director of the study.

"They believe there has to be some place within the community where disparate views can sort themselves out," she said. "They really see the school board as doing that."

"Unfortunately," she added, "they don't see *their* school board doing that."

The report cautioned that "deep public apathy and indifference" could spell trouble for boards in the future, as student populations become increasingly diverse, and creative leadership becomes more necessary.

"Some citizens believe that school-board members operate the schools, are paid handsome salaries for doing so, and if something is wrong, a board member can fix it," the report states. 'This is far from the truth. These opinions show little sense of the board as a collective, nor an understanding of a board's policy responsibility."

Divisiveness

One result of this public apathy is that more and more board members perceive themselves as representatives of special-interest groups or constituencies, rather than as trustees acting on behalf of the public interest, according to the report.

Citizens frequently expect individual board members to advocate their particular concerns, diverting board members from their proper policymaking roles.

"Such behavior can result in divisiveness among board members if several are pushing for disparate interests or demands," the study notes, saying that the situation is exacerbated in districts in which board members are "elected or appointed by geographic areas within the community."

The study found that while more and more students are members of minority groups, school-board members remain predominantly male, middle or upper-middle class, white, and college-educated.

In urban areas, where board members are more representative of their racial and ethnic constituencies, they lack "easy and influential" access to the "political and economic" decisionmakers, said Barbara A. McCloud, director of the superintendents' roundtable for the institute.

In general, the study found, board members have been isolated from other policymakers. Few boards, for example, had a regular means of conversing with representatives of other governing agencies at the state or local level.

Boards were designed to keep education out of the "hurly-burly" of politics, said Michael W. Kirst, a member of the study team and professor of education and business administration at Stanford University.

"We may need to rethink this," said Mr. Kirst, noting that the nonpartisan stance has kept boards out of the political mainstream.

The report mentions, but does not specifically endorse, the possibility of electing board members through the political-party structure.

Mr. Usdan said that, particularly in big cities, a "much more explicit connection between school governance and general governance" was needed.

But in a forum following the press conference, Hernan LaFontaine, superintendent of the Hartford school system, cautioned against bringing "partisan politics" to bear on school boards. The patronage and corruption within local municipal governments, he said, is not a model that boards should emulate.

Passive Role

The report also found that boards had been bypassed in the past three years of state education reforms.

"School boards feel they have, at best, been only peripherally involved, that they have been cast in a passive role and are perceived as reactors, rather than partners in shaping change," the report states.

That situation must be altered, it says, if educational reforms are to have impact in the classroom.

"Because school boards are charged by states and localities to make policy and govern local public education," the report argues, "their willingness and capacity to lead, in large measure, will determine the long-range success or failure of school-improvement efforts."

Board members surveyed expressed a growing sense of alarm about state intrusiveness. Eighty-five percent said they believed their states were becoming more directive. And a majority said that the state was creating more agenda items for the board.

'Real' Issues

In general, board members said, they spend too little time on "real" education issues, yet feel they must "do it all."

About 39 percent of those surveyed, for example, named appraising curricula as a key board function; yet 42 percent said they spent too little time on the task.

Likewise, about 31 percent said that continuous goal-setting, policy development, and appraisal should be high priorities, while 41 percent said too little time was devoted to these areas.

Fully one-third of the board members sampled said their boards do not have regular goal-setting or planning meetings. And only 21 percent said that carrying out and monitoring board policies absorb most of their time.

Moreover, despite the recent push for accountability in education, only 33 percent of the boards surveyed had policies for evaluating their own effectiveness.

The key, the institute suggests, is for boards to concentrate on their policymaking and oversight roles and "avoid getting bogged down in minutia and administrative duties."

Effective Boards

The study includes a list of "effectiveness indicators" that local boards can use to compare their performance to that of successful school boards nationwide.

They include: focusing on education and educational outcomes; setting broad goals and using strategic planning to accomplish them; ensuring an adequate flow of resources, equitably distributed; dealing openly with controversy; seeking community participation; exercising continuing oversight over programs and their management; and working out the division of administrative and policy responsibilities.

For copies of the report, write the Publications Department, Institute for Educational Leadership Inc., 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036. Individual copies are $6. Discounts are available for larger purchases. There is a $1 charge per book for postage and handling.

National Profile of Board Members

By Ethnic Group*

	'84	'85
Black	2.4	3.0
White	90.4	93.5
Hispanic	1.5	1.2
American Indian	.8	.8
Oriental	.5	.3
Other	4.3	1.2

*Some percentages do not total 100 because of rounding.

By Income Level

	'84	'85
Under $20,000	3.6	8.6
$20,000-29,999	18.6	13.5
$30,000-39,999	21.5	20.5
$40,000-49,999	17.0	18.7
$50,000-59,999	12.9	14.0
$60,000-69,999	8.6	7.6
$70,000-79,999	5.7	4.7
$80,000-89,999	3.3	3.7
$90,000-99,999	1.5	1.7
$100,000 or more	7.0	6.9

SOURCE: THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP